

Garcia-Escribano, A. (2019). María González-Davies and Vanessa Enríquez-Raído (eds). Situated Learning in Translator and Interpreter Training. *The Journal of Specialised Translation*, 31, 284-286. <https://doi.org/10.26034/cm.jostrans.2019.188>

This article is publish under a *Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International* (CC BY):  
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0>



© Alejandro Bolanos Garcia-Escribano, 2019

**González-Davies, Maria and Enríquez-Raído, Vanessa (eds) (2018). *Situated Learning in Translator and Interpreter Training: Bridging Research and Good Practice*. London: Routledge, pp. 154, £115 (hardback). ISBN 978 1138301771.**

This collective book has been published following a special issue of *The Interpreter and Translator Trainer* which explores situated learning in translator and interpreter training and has been most welcomed in specialised circles. The situatedness of learning, widely discussed since the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century by cognitive psychologists and researchers such as Brown, Collins and Duguid (1989) and Lave and Wenger (1991), aims to ascertain whether humans learn more effectively 'by doing'. In our field, situated learning is that where "the learning of professional translation skills would best be achieved through the collaborative undertaking of professional translation tasks, in all of their complexity, under the guidance of a professional translator" (Kiraly 2000: 43). As the editors argue, the ways in which situated learning can be applied in the translation classroom depends on the nature of the module taught. This collective volume is exemplary of the enormous interest that teaching would-be translators arouses in academic and professional environments alike.

In the first contribution of this volume, Risku reports on a project in the form of an advanced seminar course focusing on research methods for translation students. Building on the ethos that students learn collectively and construct knowledge by means of interaction and discussion, she analysed the thoughts shared by a third of her students through anonymised interviews. She concluded that work is still needed to make students become "full participants" in the "sociocultural practice" of translation research (25).

Marco then discusses a situated literary translation pathway, where students take part in task-based training, culminating in a last-year group translation project. This learning experience is orchestrated by the instructor, who acts as a project manager by distributing and monitoring the students' work as commissioned by the publisher. Sharing a common cloud-based workstation, the students produce a final translation, which is subsequently proofread by a professional reviser from the publishing house. This is an excellent example of the many benefits trainee translators obtain when being acquainted with their future communities of practice.

Along the same lines, Nam's exploration into field training for prospective translators and interpreters seems fruitful. This translator trainer organised and launched a module that was almost entirely developed in collaboration with several partner institutions, organisations and companies. Following an academic induction, students undertake real

translation and interpreting tasks, developing their skills and competences in professional settings and being assessed on their overall performance.

Of a completely different nature is Corrius, De Marco and Espasa's situated learning experience carried out with university students and professionals. By including authentic commercials and non-profit advertisements, their objective was to raise gender awareness by means of feminist pedagogies. They then gauged the opinion of all respondents by means of exhaustive questionnaires, which ultimately pointed to an overall unawareness of gender-related legal, ethical and deontological issues that may arise when translating for the marketing industry.

Prieto-Velasco and Fuentes-Luque examine the use of the web-based Google Groups tool for the teaching of multimodal translation. Fifty-six undergraduate translation students were divided up in groups and assigned a translation commission of various excerpts from an American satirical book. The projects were considered effective for the improvement of the students' translator competences, especially with regard to their communicative and teamwork skills.

Chouc and Conde offer an account of a professional learning experience carried out with master-level students of conference interpreting, which consisted of mute-booth simultaneous conference interpreting practice of a full parliamentary debate (two to three hours of duration). All in all, interpreting skills were fostered with the aid of more experienced interpreters and lecturers.

Pan reports on her application of a classroom community of practice for the teaching of simultaneous interpreting. Building on previous preparation on knowledge, skills and assessment norms, students had to organise a simulated conference in teams. Each team would subsequently work as interpreters in the conferences of their fellow classmates, thus honing their skills by performing a semi-real interpreting task. Interestingly, the students claimed to have gained confidence, learnt from each other's work and acquired procedural knowledge in a semi-authentic professional context, which represents a highly valuable pedagogical asset.

Finally, Motta carries out a theory-driven analysis of an interpreting course's tutoring programme that was conceived as a cognitive apprenticeship-based learning approach. This was based on the development of practice simulations within real contexts and blended tutoring programmes. In the latter, students prepare, undertake and evaluate interpreting sessions with teaching assistants, whose work the students can model. The learning process is enhanced with the use of a virtual supervised training platform.

By way of conclusion, many similarities can be established between the aforementioned experiences and Gouadec's (1991: 544) assumption that teaching translation in a classroom is nothing but the result of abstracting and de-contextualising the act of translation. From this perspective, would-be translators need further professional practice beyond the boundaries of higher-education institutions – the legitimate training centres as per educational regulations. Translator and interpreter trainers may find ways in which semi-professional and realistic approaches can be incorporated into their tuition. This publication is a much needed contribution to translator training literature; not only does it shed light on the importance of contextualising and situating the acquisition of translator and interpreter competences, it also showcases transferable practices for the training of would-be translators and interpreters in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## References

- **Brown, John Seely, Collins, Allan and Paul Duguid** (1989). "Situated Cognition and the Culture of Learning." *Education Researcher* 18(1), 32–42.
- **Gouadec, Daniel** (1991). "Autrement dire... Pour une redéfinition des stratégies de formation des traducteurs." *Meta : Translators' Journal* 36(4), 543–557.
- **Kiraly, Don** (2000). *A Social Constructivist Approach to Translator Education: Empowering the Translator*. Manchester: St Jerome.
- **Lave, Jean and Etienne Wenger** (1991). *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

**Alejandro Bolaños García-Escribano**

**University College London**

E-mail: a.bolanos@ucl.ac.uk